DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

MEPA NEPA Checklist

MISSION. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations

All Montanans have the right to live in a clean and healthful environment. This environmental analysis is intended to provide an evaluation of the likely impacts to the human environment from proposed actions of the project cited below. This analysis will help Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to fulfill its oversight obligations and satisfy rules and regulations of both the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Please provide a discussion for each section. If no impacts are likely, be sure to discuss the reasoning that led to your determination.

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed action:

Development _____

Renovation _____

Maintenance ___X___

Land Acquisition _____

Equipment Acquisition _____

Other (Describe) _____

2. If appropriate, agency responsible for the proposed action: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

3. Name, address phone number and e-mail address of project sponsor:

Lincoln County Sno-Kats
P.O. Box 1180
Libby, MT 59923
(406) 293-8585
Toysrs1@hotmail.com

4. Name of project: Trail Grooming of Previously Approved Trails on the KNF

5. If applicable:

Estimated construction/commencement date: N/A

Estimated completion date: N/A

Current status of project design (% complete): N/A

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range, and township):
T30,31,32, 33, 34 & 35N; R29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 & 35W; T57N, T58N, R3E

- Seventeen Mile Rd., #471, approx. 5 miles to junction of Little Tom, Quartz.
- Lower Quartz Creek, #600, all the way to Kootenai River Rd.
- Quartz Cr. Ransom Cr. Rd., #4654, approx. 6 miles to Skyline Trailhead.
- East Fork of Pipe Cr., # 336, entire 6 miles.
- Baldy Mt. Rd., #309-6783, over the top of Baldy Mt. and down to 4731 Rd. to make a loop.
- Dark Purcell Rd., #112-6783, 12 miles approx. to East Fork Bridge.
- Lawrence Mt. Rd., #250-255, approx 7 miles.
- Big Creek Rd., #336, approx 7 miles.
- Copeland-Drop Cr. Rd., #7183, approx 8 miles.
- Keeler Cr. Rd., #473, approx. 15 miles to the KNF border.
- Pete Cr. Rd., #338, approx. 17 miles.
- North Cr., Beetle Cr. Rd., #478, 10 miles approx.
- Spread Cr. Rd., #435, 13 miles approx. to Idaho state line.

Please see Appendix A.

7. Project size: estimate the numbers of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:
residential..... 0 acres
industrial ..... 0 acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation ..... 0 acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas ..... 0 acres

(d) Floodplain..... 0 acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland ..... 0 acres
dry cropland..... 0 acres
forestry approx. 163 miles of road - 215 acres
rangeland ..... 0 acres
other..... 0 acres

8. **Map/site plan:** (Attach an original 8½" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.) Please see Appendix A for grooming maps.

9. **Narrative summary of the proposed action or project, including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:**

Purpose: Lincoln County Sno-Kats proposes to groom the snow trails identified on the Kootenai snow trails map. These routes were set up with assistance from the KNF in 1969. They are rated: No. 1 - groomed regularly, No. 2 - groomed occasionally, and No. 3 - ungroomed designated routes on the KNF snow trails map. Snow conditions set the pace for the timing and amount of grooming done on No. 1 & 2 routes. No. 1 routes are done approximately every week, No. 2 routes are done less frequently, and No. 3 routes are ungroomed. It is very important that the trails are well marked and maintained. Population is increasing in our area, and more people are taking advantage of the winter season by snowmobiling. Education, safety, and wildlife concerns are also part of this proposed action. Our grooming starts December 1 and ends April 1 each year. We groom these trails to allow for a more enjoyable experience while snowmobiling.

Need: Population increases in the local communities, increases in job opportunities, and increased visits by snowmobilers from out of the area and out of state create an opportunity to better maintain identified groomed routes. Sales of snowmobiles by the two dealers in our local area indicate that winter recreation (snowmobiling) is increasing. More enthusiasts are enjoying the fun, excitement, and wonderful vistas afforded through accessing the groomed trails. With the increases in riders comes an increase in gas tax available toward grooming. Out-of-state users must purchase a temporary registration, a portion of which comes back for grooming activities. Increased use brings with it a need to better educate the users regarding safety and wildlife concerns. Providing accurate maps makes identifying trailheads and groomed routes easier, makes users aware of area closures, and gives information about local snowmobile clubs and other important contacts the user might need. Signage at trailheads and along the route can inform the rider of safety concerns and area closures, which may reduce trespass and injury. Snowmobilers add an economic boost to winter tourism and should expect accurate information and groomed trails for their investment in the activity and their support of the community.

10. **Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the MEPA-required no-action alternative). At a minimum, the following three alternatives must be presented.**

Alternative A - Preferred Alternative: Retain existing trail system. Grooming would continue on existing routes listed on the trail map; financing from Montana FWP would continue. Safety to all trail users would continue. Education of users in critical wildlife habitat and proposed wilderness areas would be expanded in some locations. Maintained parking areas would continue to provide safer traffic conditions. Outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the groomed trails would continue and enhance user enjoyment**.** This preferred alternative addresses the purpose and need for grooming snowmobile trails.

Alternative B - No-action Alternative: No action. Financing from Montana FWP would no longer continue. Trail grooming would no longer take place. Roads in the area would continue to be used by snowmobiles. Accidents could occur because safety to all users would suffer greatly. Trees across roads, moguls, road signage, trail head maintenance, and safety signage would all stop. Education of users in critical habitat areas and wilderness areas may be limited. Unmaintained trailheads could possibly cause unsafe traffic conditions. Loss of user enjoyment of this recreation on the forest may occur. There would be possibility of an increase in search and rescue needs with no marked, groomed trails. The no-action alternative does not achieve the purpose and need identified for the proposed action.

Alternative C - Groom existing trails historically done and add new ones as permitted. This alternative requires additional resource information on new trails recommended for grooming. Without this information T & E species may be adversely affected. Also, other wildlife and natural resources may be impacted. A new environmental assessment may be required to evaluate effects.

Alternative D - Groom designated routes that have been groomed since 1969, with the exception of Keeler Creek Road. This alternative would eliminate this route from the groomed system to prevent potential disturbance of wintering mountain goats in the Savage Peak area. All remaining routes would be groomed. A replacement route would need approval of all parties to continue our total groomable miles allowed. This alternative would reduce the total miles of groomed trails that have occurred in past years. A replacement route would not be feasible at this time for the reasons stated under Alternative C. This alternative would not achieve the purpose and need as well as Alternative A.

Groomed trails do not enter critical mountain goat habitat. Goat winter range is located well outside of the groomed trail system. They are generally south of any open area the snowmobile club uses. The main concern is the Savage Peak area, which is currently closed to winter motorized use. There have been reported infrequent incursions into this area by snowmobilers from the Keeler Creek trail, but the route is extremely difficult. It appears that incursions occur primarily from the Spar Lake area, which has no groomed trails. It is also possible that some of the incursions are a result of snowmobilers entering from Idaho.

The preferred alternative has identified mitigation measures, which include the use of maps identifying areas closed to snowmobiling that would be posted at all relevant trailheads. Also, monitoring the closures by possible fly-over, or other means (MFWP and/or USFS), would help determine how well maps, education, and club participation (informing the riders) are at reducing the trespass into closed areas.

Comments: Written comments were received from Cabinet Resource Group & Montana Wilderness Association. MFWP, USFWS, and USFS also submitted wildlife review forms.

Comments Concerning T & E Species: The comments concerning the T&E species were generally informational, indicating that the identified groomed routes are allowed under the Lynx Amendment, and that there are grizzly bears, wolves, and possibly bald eagles in the areas we groom. The USFWS and USFS indicated that our grooming should have no adverse effect on the T & E species. Sensitive species, wolverine and fisher, may also be in the area and grooming is unlikely to have an effect on these sensitive species. Harassment or harm to wildlife is not intended and is addressed in the snowmobile code of ethics located in the Kootenai Snow Trails map.

Comments from Cabinet Resource Group & MWA: 1) Trespass into the Savage Peak area (see 5g & j). 2) Maps are provided by the KNF in conjunction with MFWP. To provide better accuracy it should also indicate the area closures on the KNF. We would expect a new map to help educate users about the groomed trail system, area closures, code of ethics, and other valuable information. 3 & 4) Education & signing (see 5g & j). 5) Monitoring the closures by possible fly-over, or other means (MFWP and or USFS) will help determine how well our maps, education, and club participation (informing the riders) are at reducing the trespass into the closed area. 6) Enforcement: Monitoring will give an indication as to how education, maps, and club support may have reduced this trespass. Realizing that we cannot monitor everyone, it is up to each individual to do what is right. It is up to the KNF to identify and prosecute those individuals guilty of trespass.

Comments from MFWP: 1) Wildlife concerns indicated, specifically mountain goats. 2) As stated, most trespass occurs on ungroomed trails leading to designated riding areas in Spar & Spruce Lakes. Snowmobiles accessing the Savage Peak area from the groomed Keeler route are a rare occurrence. Through education and accurate maps, possible trespass should be reduced from all access points (see 5g & j). The T & E species comments are mentioned above and supplied by the USFWS and USFS (also see 5f & h). 4) Recommending that snowmobilers stay west and north of Bear Mountain is beyond the scope of the groomed trail EA. Concerns for wildlife are being met with the Snowmobile Code of Ethics, education, and maps identifying area closures.

11. Listing of each local, state, or federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a) Permits		
Agency Name: USFS Kootenai National Forest	Permit: Challenge Cost Share Agreement.	Date Filed: 3/19/2007

(b) Funding	
Agency Name: MFWP	Funding Amount: $10,000 Montana Snowmobile Trail Grooming Grant.

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities	
Agency Name: United States Forest Service – Kootenai National Forest	Type of Responsibility: Land Managing Agency for trail system.

12. List of agencies consulted during preparation of this environmental checklist:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
United States Forest Service – Kootenai National Forest

13. Name of preparer(s) of this environmental checklist:
Donna O' Neil, Al Corda, Jerry Wandler, and Ted Anderson of Rocky Mountain Ecosystem Service, Inc.

14. Date submitted: May 1, 2007

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Most of the information contained in the 1996 EA is still appropriate and correct. Please reference this document when appropriate for you needs.

Additional information used in parts of this EA came from a snowmobile fact book produced by International Snowmobile Manufactures Association (ISMA) and others. This document can be referenced online at www.snowmobile.org.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Land Resources" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on land resources. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?			X		NO	1e.
f. Other						

1e. Potential snow slides are of minor danger on our groomed trails. We don't have any areas, historically, that avalanche onto groomed trails. Each year avalanche awareness classes are offered free to all interested parties. (See page 5 of EA 1996)

1a, b, c, d. This is maintenance on existing trails, so this project will not reduce stability, soil productivity, disturb geologic features, or cause change in beds or banks of streams, rivers, or lakes.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Air" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on air resources. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X		No	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		No	2b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. Any discharge that will conflict with federal or state air quality regs?		X				
f. Other						

2a. As industry standards increase, noise and emissions levels will decrease. Snowmobile owners can reduce emissions by keeping their engines tuned, and use of synthetic oil is recommended to cut down on pollutants.

2b. All current model snowmobiles meet the current EPA standards for noise and emissions/odor. Technological advances with four stroke engines and improved two-stroke technology will further reduce both 2a and b.

2c, d, e. This application for grooming will not change climate, create adverse effect on vegetation, or cause discharge in conflict with federal or state regulations.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Water" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on water resources. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. Effects to a designated floodplain?		X				
m. Any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations?		X				
n. Other:						

3c-g & i. The grooming of trails should have no negative effects on surface or ground water quantity and quality. No negative effects on flooding or water rights. All water crossings are bridges.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Vegetation" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on vegetative resources. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4f.
f. Effects to wetlands or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:						

4f. There is a weed plan in place for some of the parking areas (Quartz, Seventeen Mile, & East Fork, Dark Purcell) (see Rec. Trails Grant 2005). Others will be per KNF weed strategy (Herbicide Weed Control EA, January 1997) (Keeler, Spread, Pete, Meadow Creek). Trailhead users would be encouraged to wash their vehicles, trailers, and machines prior to winter use.

4a-d, f. Grooming will not alter existing plant communities nor adversely affect threatened or endangered plant species. It will not reduce production acreage or affect wetlands or farmlands.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Fish/Wildlife" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on fish and wildlife resources. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?			X		No	
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		Yes	
h. Adverse effects to threatened/endangered species or their habitat?			X		No	
i. Introduction or exportation of any species not presently or historically occurring in the affected location?		X				
j. Other:						

5a-e. No critical effect on fish & wildlife habitat. No change in diversity or abundance of game animals, birds, or nongame species. No introduction of new species or creation of barriers to animal movement.

5f, h. The proposed action is not likely to adversely affect grizzly bear, lynx, or wolves (see Wildlife Biologist Glen Gill's comments - 3/20/07, and Ben Conrad USFWS comments - 4/12/07). MT Natural Heritage Program map indicates no plant or animal T&E species included near groomed trails (EA 1996, page 8).

5g. Trailheads located in winter game range will be posted requiring that the public not harass or chase wildlife. Concerns have been expressed about stressing and displacing mountain goats. Groomed trails do not enter critical mountain goat habitat. At club meetings, members will be informed of areas closed to snowmobiling. Signs identifying area closures will be posted at trailheads. Club members will assist in preventing trespass by informing other users of closures in the area they are riding. Maps indicating area closures would be available to all winter users at forest service offices. Snowmobilers from out of the area (or state) who purchase a Temporary Use Permit should ask for a map indicating groomed routes as well as areas closed to motorized use.

The concern for wildlife winter range is important. The goat winter range is located well outside of the groomed trail system. They are generally south of any open area we use. The main concern is the Savage Peak area, which is currently closed to winter motorized use. The use of maps identifying areas closed to snowmobiling will be information will be posted at all relevant trailheads. Monitoring the closures by possible fly-over, or other means (MFWP and or USFS), will help determine how well maps, education, and club participation (informing the riders) are at reducing the trespass into closed areas.

Note: Laminated color maps showing closed areas on the KNF are currently posted at the Keeler & Spar trailheads. The IPNF is open to all users. These two forests are in both states. There has been grooming from the Trestle Creek side (IPNF) that connects to our groomed Keeler trail.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Noise/Electrical Effects" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects of noise and electrical activities. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		Yes	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		No	6b.
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

6a. As use increases, noise levels may increase; however, as the users spread out over the trail systems, noise levels will decrease at any specific site or area. With increases in technology, the noise concerns should diminish.

6b. Cross-country skiers or dog sledders using the system will be exposed to noise levels they consider a nuisance for a short time. Cross-country skiers, dog sledders, and other winter recreationists will be informed that they are on a groomed trail system identified for snowmobile use and should expect snowmobiles and noise as a condition of use.

6c, d. There are no homes in close proximity to the grooming operation; therefore no electrostatic, electromagnetic, or radio/television interference will occur.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Land Use" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on land use. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. A conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. A conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?			X		Yes	7c.
d. Adverse effects on, or relocation of, residences?		X				
e. Compliance with existing land policies for land use, transportation, and open space?		X				
f. Increased traffic hazards, traffic volume, or speed limits or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
g. Other: safety				X	Yes	7g.

7c. If timber harvesting and transporting of logs occur on any of the groomed trails, snowmobiling will cease and signage will be posted.

7g. While emergency situations can be reduced through safety and education, a groomed trail is considered a positive impact for Search and Rescue to use for access to reach areas quickly in case of lost or injured snowmobilers, skiers, and other winter recreationists.

7a, b, d, e, f. Grooming will not interfere with productivity of existing land. It does not conflict with natural areas of unusual scientific or educational importance. It will not adversely affect any residence or increase traffic hazards, volume, etc., on existing transportation facilities or movement. Grooming is in compliance with existing land use policies and the purpose and need of this EA.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Risk/Health Hazards" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects of risks and health hazards. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects of the action as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Effects on existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create need for a new plan?			X			8b.
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. Disturbance to any sites with known or potential deposits of hazardous materials?		X				
e. The use of any chemical toxicants?			X		YES	8e.
f. Other: Timber harvest near groomed trails			X		YES	8f.

8a, c, d. Grooming poses no risk of explosion or release of hazardous substances; no apparent human health hazard. Grooming does not disturb any known deposit of hazardous materials.

8b. A positive effect will be created through the use of emergency plans developed by the snowmobile club and the local search & rescue organization (EA 1996, Appendix A).

8e. Weed sprays used will be specified and supervised by KNF licensed personnel.

8f. If timber harvest and transportation of logs occur on any groomed trails, snowmobiling will cease and signs will be posted (Sign Plan, EA 1996, Appendix A).

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Community Impact" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on the community. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?			X			9a.
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X			9c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e.
f. Other:						

9a. Population growth could increase, possibly increasing the use of our groomed trail system and the experiences it affords.

9c. Grooming of trails brings winter recreation (snowmobiling) enthusiasts from beyond the local community. While these individuals are in the community, they bring winter tourism dollars (for fuel, food, motels, and other businesses) to our community during a time when the local economy is generally slow.

9e. May have a slightly higher usage if trails are groomed; people with some physical restrictions are able to ride groomed trails and have an enjoyable experience, and thus may go more often.

9b, d. No other effects, alteration of the community social structure, or significant changes in industrial or commercial activity are anticipated as a result of our grooming these trails.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Public Services/Taxes/Utilities" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on public services, taxes and utilities. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. An effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered, governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If so, specify:			X			10a.
b. Effects on the local or state tax base and revenues?			X			10b.
c. A need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Other.						
Additional information requested:						
f. Define projected revenue sources.	N/A					
g. Define projected maintenance costs.	$13,500.00					

10a. Search and rescue will have better routes to use for access to help find lost or injured winter recreationists. Snowmobilers would benefit from signed trails and trail heads. This may help reduce possible search and rescue missions.

10b. Out-of-state riders are required to purchase a registration for their machines each year. This revenue goes to the state of Montana, a portion of which comes back to the county where the permit is purchased.

10c, d. Grooming will not require any substantial alteration of any utility. Grooming will not significantly impact any energy source.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Aesthetics/Recreation" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on aesthetics & recreation. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X		Yes	11c.
d. Adverse effects to any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas?		X				
e. Other:						

11c. Having the trails groomed, signed, and in good shape may increase the tourism. This would be hard to measure as these areas are currently used for recreation and tourism.

11a, b, d. Groomed trails lead to scenic vistas. They provide the user with a better view, and in no way obstruct or alter the aesthetic quality or character of any view, river, or wilderness area. Many of our groomed trails lead to destinations where the scenery is unique in winter and the experience rewarding.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Cultural/historical Resources" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects on cultural/historical resources. Even if you checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical changes that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. Adverse effects to historic or cultural resources?		X				
e. Other:						

12a-d. No impact. There are no known cultural or historic resources on our groomed trail system; therefore, no effect on these resources.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. At the bottom of this "Summary Evaluation of Significance" checklist, provide a narrative description and evaluation of the cumulative and secondary effects. Even if you have checked "none" in the table, explain how you came to that conclusion. Consider the immediate, short-term effects as well as the long-term effects. Attach additional pages of narrative if needed.

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources, which create a significant effect when considered together, or in total.)			X			13a.
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects that are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. Have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy?		X				
Additional information requested:						
g. List any federal or state permits required.	None					

13a. Grooming these trails may over time slightly increase use in areas for recreation in the winter. This cumulative increase can be absorbed by the large area our grooming routes cover. The recreation use occurring in the winter season on existing routes and trails does not create a significant cumulative effect on the environment or resources.

13b, c, d, e, f. Grooming trails identified by the KNF winter snowmobile trails map and travel plan: will not involve potential risks, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous.; do not potentially conflict with any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard, or formal plan; does not establish a precedent that significant environmental impacts will be proposed; does not generate <u>substantial</u> debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created; and does not have organized opposition or generate <u>substantial</u> public controversy.

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Discuss the cumulative and secondary effects of this project as a whole.

The cumulative and secondary effects of this project, when considering past, present, and future snowmobile grooming and the connected actions associated with snowmobiling activities, would not result in significant cumulative impacts. Some increase in recreational snowmobiling use may occur due to the existence of groomed trails and anticipated increased population growth. The increased use is not considered significant. The narrative descriptions and evaluation of cumulative effects associated with MEPA/NEPA checklists address these anticipated minor effects.

2. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this Environmental Checklist (Part II), is an EIS required?

YES _____

NO __X___

If an EIS is not required, explain why the current checklist level of review is appropriate.

An EA (October 1996) selected Alternative 4 for snowmobiling trail grooming by using funds generated from the percentage of the gas tax that goes towards snowmobile recreation. This EA assessed specific concerns in areas groomed by the Lincoln County Sno-Kats. The concerns included social and resource values that compromise the human environment. The MEPA/NEPA checklist addressed potential issues of the ongoing snowmobile grooming program. Public scoping occurred in the winter of 2007. No new issues were identified that were not addressed in the 1996 EA or the 2007 checklist and accompanying documents. Therefore an EIS is not required.

3. Public Comment. At minimum, public input to the proposed project must be solicited through a legal ad in a daily newspaper with widest circulation in the immediate project area. This ad must run for a minimum of one day with at least 30 days allowed for public comment. The ad must include a brief description of the proposed project with the name, address, and contact information of the project sponsor. Comments should be provided in writing. The public comment period for this project must have occurred within 24 months (2 years) of the grant submission deadline. **The draft is out for a 30-day public review from June 25 through July 25, 2007. Please direct questions/comments to FWP Parks Manager Dave Landstrom at (406) 751-4574 or e-mail to dlandstrom@mt.gov.**

a) Please include a photocopy of the legal advertisement, showing the date on which it ran in the newspaper. **See Appendix C.**

b). Describe the total public involvement for this project beyond the legal ad. Projects may not be planned in isolation. The general public, adjacent landowners, and other interested parties should be involved from the onset. Promotion of public participation may be through newspaper articles and any other means available, such as public meetings, federal quarterly newsletters, TV programs, radio announcements, etc.

4. Public Input Summary. Please describe the nature of the public comments received during the official public comment period. Tally numbers of comments in support of the project and the numbers against. Summarize the most important comments received and your response to these comments. For example, if a reviewer made suggestions on how the project could be made better, how did you respond to that suggestion? **All public input is addressed in the alternative section of the EA.**

a) Provide copies of all comments received.

Please see Appendix B

b) Changes to project design or scope of work based on public input.

- **The maps created by the KNF in conjunction with MFWP will include areas closed to snowmobiling and the importance of compliance for wintering wildlife.**
- **Education of club members and out-of-area and out-of-state riders will be increased to prevent incursions into areas that are off limits to snowmobiling and critical**
- **Trailhead maps with area closures.**
- **Monitoring: If additional trail funding is appropriated approximately $2000 per year, one or more fly-overs could take place monitoring goats and snowmobiles in the Savage Peak area. A member of the club and MFWP person need to be involved with the fly-over.**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affected Environment – The aspects of the human environment that may change as a result of an agency action.

Alternative – A different approach to achieve the same objective or result as the proposed action.

Categorical Exclusion – A level of environmental review for agency action that do not individually, collectively, or cumulatively cause significant impacts to the human environment, as determined by rulemaking or programmatic review, and for which an EA or EIS is not required.

Cumulative Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that, individually, may be minor for a specific project but, when considered in relation to other actions, may result in significant impacts.

Direct Impacts – Primary impacts that have a direct cause and effect relationship with a specific action, i.e. they occur at the same time and place as the action that causes the impact.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that either do not significantly affect the human environment or for which the agency is uncertain whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.

Environmental Assessment Checklist – An EA checklist is a standard form of an EA, developed by an agency for actions that generally produce minimal impacts.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A comprehensive evaluation of the impacts to the human environment that likely would result from an agency action or reasonable alternatives to that action. An EIS also serves a public disclosure of agency decision-making. Typically, an EIS is prepared in two steps. The Draft EIS is a preliminary detailed written statement that facilitates public review and comment. The Final EIS is a completed, written statement that includes a summary of major conclusions and supporting information from the Draft EIS, responses to substantive comments received on the Draft EIS, a list of all comments on the Draft EIS and any revisions made to the Draft EIS and an explanation of the agency's reasons for its decision.

Environmental Review – An evaluation, prepared in compliance with the provisions of MEPA and the MEPA Model Rules, of the impacts to the human environment that may result as a consequence of an agency action.

Human Environment – Those attributes, including but not limited to biological, physical, social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic factors that interrelate to form the environment.

Long-Term Impact – An impact, which lasts well beyond the period of the initial project.

Mitigated Environmental Assessment – The appropriate level of environmental review for actions that normally would require an EIS, except that the state agency can impose designs, enforceable controls, or stipulations to reduce the otherwise significant impacts to below the level of significance. A mitigated EA must demonstrate that: (1) all impacts have been identified; (2) all impacts can be mitigated below the level of significance; and (3) no significant impact is likely to occur.

Mitigation – An enforceable measure(s), designed to reduce or prevent undesirable effects or impacts of the proposed action.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – The federal counterpart of MEPA that applies only to federal actions.

No Action Alternative – An alternative, required by the MEPA Model Rules for purposes of analysis, that describes the agency action that would result in the least change to the human environment.

Public Participation – The process by which an agency includes interested and affected individuals, organizations, and agencies in decision making.

Record of Decision – Concise public notice that announces the agency's decision, explains the reason for that decision, and describes any special conditions related to implementation of the decision.

Scoping – The process, including public participation, that an agency uses to define the scope of the environmental review.

Secondary Impacts – Impacts to the human environment that are indirectly related to the agency action, i.e. they are induced by a direct impact and occur at a later time or distance from the triggering action.

Short-Term Impact – An impact directly associated with a project that is of relatively short duration.

Significance – The process of determining whether the impacts of a proposed action are serious enough to warrant the preparation of an EIS. An impact may be adverse, beneficial or both. If none of the adverse impacts are significant, an EIS is not required.

Supplemental Review – A modification of a previous environmental review document (EA or EIS) based on changes in the proposed action, the discovery of new information, or the need for additional evaluation.

Tiering – Preparing an environmental review by focusing specifically on narrow scope of issues because the broader scope of issues was adequately addressed in previous environmental review document(s) that may be incorporated by reference.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Outdoor Recreation Grants
Wildlife Review Form

Project Sponsor __Lincoln County Sno-Kats_____

Sponsor Contact __Donna O'Neil_____ 4062938585_____
Name Telephone No.

Project Category (Check appropriate box)

- [ ] New Trails Construction: new trail, trail-head, trail-side facilities
- [ ] Trail Renovation: renovation, expansion, relocation, redesign of existing facilities
- [x] Trail Maintenance
- [ ] Other

Required Materials

- [ ] Detailed maps of project location (USGS 1:24,000 scale quad map at a minimum)
- [ ] Complete description of project : Over the snow grooming of road routes on snow map

Applicant fills out information above this line

Wildlife biologist fills out information below this line

1. Are there any wildlife concerns? Explain.

2. Will there be any possible effects on:

   a. Critical seasonal wildlife habitats.

Wildlife Biologist Signature Page

☐ I don't recommend this project as proposed.

Signature: _____

Agency, title, phone number: _____

Date (month, day, year): _____

☑ I recommend this project with the following stipulations:

See attached sheet

Signature: Glen R. Gill

Agency, title, phone number: U.S. Forest Service, Wildlife Biologist (406) 295-4

Date (month, day, year): 3/30/2007

☐ I did not have enough time to adequately review this proposal and subsequently do not want to give authorization.

Signature: _____

Agency, title, phone number: _____

Date (month, day, year): _____

Suggested reference for recreation effects on wildlife:

Joslin, G., and H. Youmans, coordinators. 1999. Effects of Recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife: A Review for Montana. Committee on Effects of Recreation on Wildlife, Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society. 307 pp.

Lincoln County Sno-Kats Groomed Trail EA Renewal

Feedback from Wildlife Specialist on the Three Rivers Ranger District, USDA Forest Service. The following wildlife review pertains only to the groomed runs on this ranger district.

1. Are there any wildlife concerns? Explain.

Trail grooming and snowmobile activities may affect movement patterns, foraging and/or behavior of Canada lynx (federally designated "Threatened" species). In order for this project to occur without an adverse effect, there should be no net increase in groomed or designated over-the-snow routes and snowmobile play areas.

2. Will there be any possible effects on:

a. Critical seasonal wildlife habitats

Since the groomed trails follow roads, potential encounters with wildlife are expected. Moose, deer, and other mammals wander along or across roads while foraging. The proposed groomed trails parallel or cross riparian areas. During the winter season, these areas are frequented by animals searching for food, water or resting areas. During heavier snow seasons, wildlife may prefer to move on groomed trails, as it requires less energy to cover territory.

e. Federally listed threatened, endangered, sensitive species: are there any in the area? May this project affect any? How? Will this project, as proposed, require a biological assessment as part of consultation with the USFWS on TES species?

Please read the answer to Question #1. Another threatened species occurring within the boundaries of the Forest Service district includes the gray wolf. The grooming activity is not likely to have an effect on wolves. However, any type of harassment to the lynx or wolf would be unlawful.

Sensitive species in the area may include wolverine and fisher.

If the proposed grooming activities maintain the historical trails, and no harassment or harm is intended to wildlife, then consultation with the USFWS seems unlikely.

Glen Gill 3/30/2007

Glen Gill
Wildlife Biologist
Three Rivers Ranger District

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Outdoor Recreation Grants
Wildlife Review Form

Project Sponsor __Lincoln County Sno-Kats_____

Sponsor Contact __Donna O'Neil_____ 4062938585_____
Name Telephone No.

Project Category (Check appropriate box)

- [ ] New Trails Construction: new trail, trail-head, trail-side facilities
- [ ] Trail Renovation: renovation, expansion, relocation, redesign of existing facilities
- [X] Trail Maintenance
- [ ] Other

Required Materials

- [ ] Detailed maps of project location (USGS 1:24,000 scale quad map at a minimum)
- [ ] Complete description of project : Over the snow grooming of road routes on snow map

Applicant fills out information above this line

Wildlife biologist fills out information below this line

1. Are there any wildlife concerns? Explain. There are wildlife concerns.

2. Will there be any possible effects on:

   a. Critical seasonal wildlife habitats. Possible. I believe most snowmobile activity on Savage Mtn. comes from the Spar Lake, Spruce Lakes designated riding areas. However, if snowmobilers are accessing Savage Mtn. via the Keeler groomed route, this will have a negative impact on mountain goats

using the area during late Winter/Spring.
The Snowmobile Club is very much aware of this issue. (* more below)

b. Fawning or calving areas.

c. Breeding, roosting, nesting, perching or hunting areas.

d. Riparian habitat.

e. Federally listed threatened, endangered, sensitive species: are there any in the area? May this project affect any? How? Will this project, as proposed, require a biological assessment as part of consultation with the USFWS on TES species? (not so much in the Quartz Creek area) All of the groomed routes in the Purcell Mtns. travel through occupied Canada Lynx habitat. There are also two identified wolf packs in the upper Yaak; one on Pete Creek/Spread Creek and one between Vinal Lake and Boulder Creek. I do not know if snowmobile activity has negative impacts on these species. The snowmobile Club should at least be aware of this issue.

f. Other

3. Mitigating measures: Examples could include signing, alternate routes, use restrictions, timing, etc. If there are no mitigating measures and project is not acceptable as proposed, reject the proposal! Supply additional page if necessary.

4. Additional comments.

* Drainage heads on the south side of Keeler Creek, historically wintered mountain goats: Cliff Creek, Cheer Creek, Briar Creek, Drift Creek and around Twin Pk and Drift Peak. Snowmobile activity should not be allowed in these areas. If snowmobile activity is restricted in these areas there will be minimal impact to mountain goats and their habitats. I am recommending that snowmobile use be confined to areas north and west of Bear Mtn and all the areas north of the main Keeler Creek drainage. The Savage Mtn. area was identified as a non-motorized use area in the Kootenai National Forest Plan of 1989. In the interest of mountain goat habitat security, it should remain a non-motorized designation in all seasons.

Wildlife Biologist Signature Page

☐ I don't recommend this project as proposed.

Signature: _____

Agency, title, phone number: _____

Date (month, day, year): _____

☒ I recommend this project with the following stipulations: Lincoln County Sno-Kats will post signs with maps designating areas off-limits to snowmobile use. They will monitor for compliance. They w educate local and non-resident riders about the Savage Mountain area being off limits. Continued snowmobile us in the Savage Mtn. area, and the Cliff Creek, Cheer Creek, Brian C and Drift Creek areas will be grounds for revocation of fund

Signature: Jerry Brown

Agency, title, phone number: FWP, Wildlife Biologist, 293-4161

Date (month, day, year): 4/13/07

☐ I did not have enough time to adequately review this proposal and subsequently do not want to give authorization.

Signature: _____

Agency, title, phone number: _____

Date (month, day, year): _____

Suggested reference for recreation effects on wildlife:

Joslin, G., and H. Youmans, coordinators. 1999. Effects of Recreation on Rocky Mountain Wildlife: A Review for Montana. Committee on Effects of Recreation on Wildlife, Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society. 307 pp.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Outdoor Recreation Grants
Fisheries Review Form

Project Sponsor Lincoln County Sno-Kats

Sponsor Contact Donna O'Neil (Name) 406-293-7596 H. (Telephone No.) 8585 W.

Project Category (Check appropriate space)

_____ New Trails Construction: new trail, trail-head, trail-side facilities

_____ Trail Renovation: renovation, expansion, relocation, and redesign of existing facilities

X Trail Maintenance

_____ Other

Required Materials

_____ Map of project location (USGS 1:24,000 at a minimum)

_____ Complete description of project

Applicant fills out information above this line

Fisheries biologist fills out information below this line

1. Are there any fisheries or fisheries habitat concerns?

   None

2. Describe any potential effects on:

   a. Fish species

b. Federally listed threatened, endangered, sensitive species: are there any in the area? Will this project affect any? How? Will this project, as proposed, require a biological assessment as part of consultation with the USFWS on TES species?

600 – Quartz Cr. – bull trout. No effect from road use. Westslope cutthroat trout.
336 – E. Fk. Pipe/Big Cr. – bull trout. Westslope cutthroat trout.
435 Spread Cr. - Westslope cutthroat trout.
338 Pete Cr. – Westslope cutthroat trout.

c. Riparian areas

All grooming/compacting will occur on existing roadbed. It is assumed there would be no impact on riparian areas.

d. Water quality

None

e. Potential sedimentation or any other issues

None

f. Other

3. Mitigating measures: Examples could include alternate routes, signs, design changes to crossings, etc. If there are no mitigating measures and project is not acceptable, reject the proposal! Supply additional pages if necessary.

None

4. Will this project require 124, 310 or 404 permits and, if so, have they been completed?

No

4. Additional comments.
This analysis includes the following roads only
600 Quartz Creek road - entire
4681 Bigfoot road – jct 471 to jct 4654
4654 Ransome Cr. Road – jct 4681 for aqpprox 5 miles to N Bdy of section 15.
471 Seventeenmile road – from jct 068 to jct 4681
336 East Fork Pipe – jct 068 to jct 248
6783/112 loop – Purcell
309/4731 loop – Big Cr. Baldy
753 – jct 336 to jct 255
255 – jct 336 to jct 250
250 Garden Ridge – entire

b. Federally listed threatened, endangered, sensitive species: are there any in the area? Will this project affect any? How? Will this project, as proposed, require a biological assessment as part of consultation with the USFWS on TES species?

600 – Quartz Cr. – bull trout. No effect from road use. Westslope cutthroat trout.
336 – E. Fk. Pipe/Big Cr. – bull trout. Westslope cutthroat trout.
435 Spread Cr. - Westslope cutthroat trout.
338 Pete Cr. – Westslope cutthroat trout.

c. Riparian areas

All grooming/compacting will occur on existing roadbed. It is assumed there would be no impact on riparian areas.

d. Water quality

None

e. Potential sedimentation or any other issues

None

f. Other

3. Mitigating measures: Examples could include alternate routes, signs, design changes to crossings, etc. If there are no mitigating measures and project is not acceptable, reject the proposal! Supply additional pages if necessary.

None

4. Will this project require 124, 310 or 404 permits and, if so, have they been completed?

No

4. Additional comments.
This analysis includes the following roads only
600 Quartz Creek road - entire
4681 Bigfoot road – jct 471 to jct 4654
4654 Ransome Cr. Road – jct 4681 for aqpprox 5 miles to N Bdy of section 15.
471 Seventeenmile road – from jct 068 to jct 4681
336 East Fork Pipe – jct 068 to jct 248
6783/112 loop – Purcell
309/4731 loop – Big Cr. Baldy
753 – jct 336 to jct 255
255 – jct 336 to jct 250
250 Garden Ridge – entire

7183 – jct 336 to SE section 20 (N Fk big Cr.)
435 Spread Cr. – jct 508 to district Bdy
748 – jct 435 to jct 338 (Pete Cr.)
338 Pete Cr. – jct 508 to jct 398 (I believe this road no. is incorrect) – to middle section 21 (Winkum Cr.)

Fisheries Biologist Signature Page

☐ I don't recommend this project as proposed.

Signature: _____

Agency, title, phone number: _____

Date (month, day, year): _____

☒ I recommend this project with the following stipulations:

Signature: _____

Agency, title, phone number: USDA Forest Service, Forest Fisheries Biologist (406) 283-7634

Date (month, day, year): 11/20/06

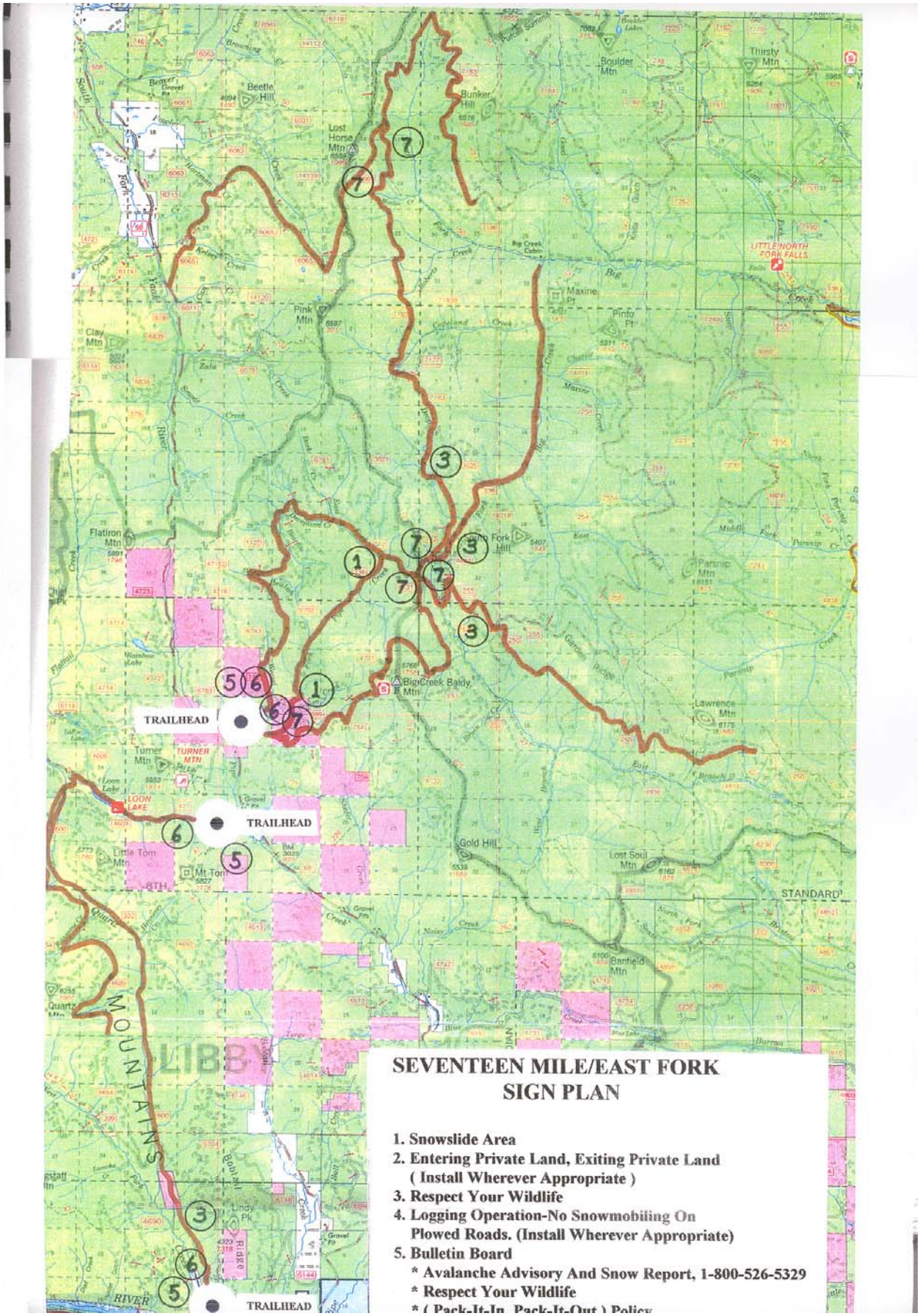
☐ I did not have enough time to adequately review this proposal and subsequently do not want to give authorization.

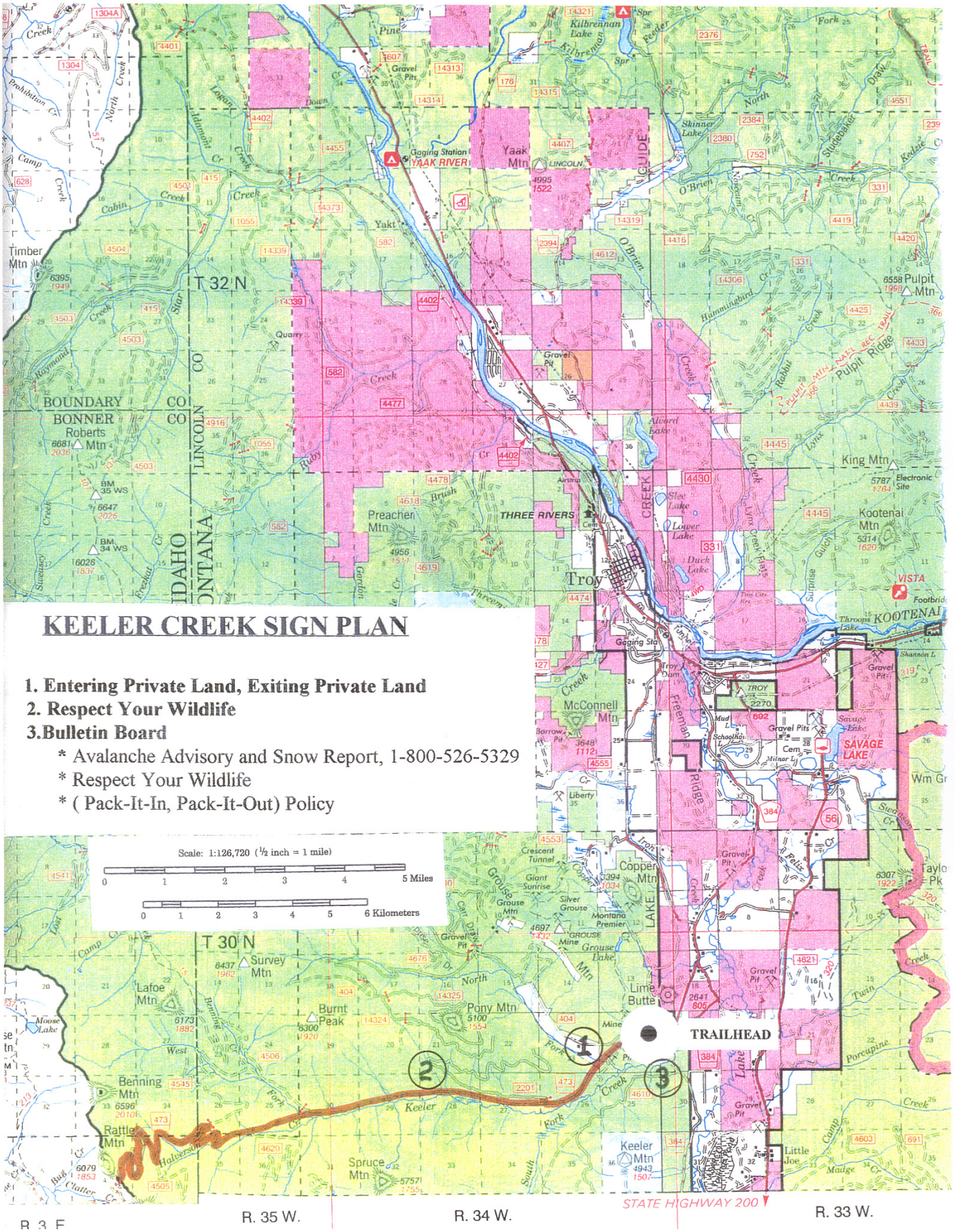
Signature: _____

Agency, title, phone number: _____

Date (month, day, year): _____

APPENDIX A - PROJECT MAPS




KEELER CREEK SIGN PLAN
1. Entering Private Land, Exiting Private Land
2. Respect Your Wildlife
3.Bulletin Board
* Avalanche Advisory and Snow Report, 1-800-526-5329
* Respect Your Wildlife
* (Pack-It-In, Pack-It-Out) Policy
Scale: 1:126,720 (½ inch = 1 mile)
5 Miles
6 Kilometers
TRAILHEAD
1
2
3
T 32 N
T 30 N
BOUNDARY CO
BONNER CO
LINCOLN CO
IDAHO
MONTANA
Troy
THREE RIVERS
YAAK RIVER
KOOTENAI
SAVAGE LAKE
VISTA
Yaak Mtn
Pulpit Mtn
Pulpit Ridge
King Mtn
Kootenai Mtn
Preachen Mtn
McConnell Mtn
Copper Mtn
Lime Butte
Pony Mtn
Burnt Peak
Survey Mtn
Lafoe Mtn
Benning Mtn
Rattle Mtn
Spruce Mtn
Keeler Mtn
Timber Mtn
Roberts Mtn
Little Joe
STATE HIGHWAY 200
R. 35 W.
R. 34 W.
R. 33 W.

SPREAD/PETE CREEK SIGN PLAN

1. Intersection Ahead
2. Respect Your Wildlife
3. Bulletin Board
   * Avalanche Advisory and Snow Report, 1-800-526-5329
   * Respect Your Wildlife
   * (Pack-It-In, Pack-It-Out) Policy

Jerry & Andrea Wandler

From: "Jerry Wandler" <jwandler@fvcc.edu>
To: <wanzy@frontiernet.net>
Sent: Friday, April 13, 2007 2:35 PM
Subject: FW: MEPA input for the Lincoln County Sno-Kats

-----Original Message-----
From: Ben_Conard@fws.gov [mailto:Ben_Conard@fws.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2007 12:48 PM
To: Jerry Wandler
Subject: Re: MEPA input for the Lincoln County Sno-Kats

Hi Jerry,

I spoke with Donna the other day and sent my comments to her via email yesterday (April 11, 2007). Below is a cut-and-paste copy of my comments. Thanks for seeking input.
- Ben

To: Ms. Donna O'Neil
Lincoln County Sno-Kats Representative
email: toysrs1@hotmail.com
phone: 406-293-8585 (w) 406-293-7590 (h)

From: Ben Conard, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Date: April 11, 2007

Re: Comments on grant proposal for snowmobile route grooming.

Dear Ms. O'Neil,

This is in response to your written request for comments to your grant proposal, which I received March 27, 2007. As I understand it, Lincoln County Sno-Kats has applied for a Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks grant to conduct grooming of existing snowmobile routes on the Kootenai National Forest. The comments you seek are a requirement of the grant proposal. You are not seeking a U.S. Forest Service decision or permit with this application, as these routes have long been approved and groomed. Your proposal is for a funding source to conduct your activity.

Due to the fast turnaround requirement you mentioned during our phone conversation on April 10, 2007, and the fact that this is not a Forest Service proposal requiring a Biological Assessment, I am providing informal comments via email for use in your grant proposal.

If the facts are as I understand them above, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has no significant comments regarding your proposal. As described, your proposal is not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx (Lynx canadensis) or other listed species such as grizzly bears (Ursus arctos horribilis).

While the US Fish and Wildlife Service is not in a position to judge the site-specific issues of each trail, I can say that continued use and grooming of existing snowmobile trails should not be a significant issue for the protection and conservation of Canada lynx . The Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy (Ruediger et al. 2000, as revised) recommends that: On federal lands in lynx habitat, allow no net increase in groomed or designated over-the-snow routes and designated snowmobile areas by LAU [Lynx Analysis Unit] unless the designation serves to consolidate unregulated use and improves lynx habitat through a net reduction of compacted snow areas. Your proposal seems compatible with this recommendation.

Regarding grizzly bears, the denning season typically overlaps with snowmobile season and use of existing groomed routes should not interfere with denning grizzly bears. At issue would be where snowmobile use overlaps with grizzly bear denning habitat, and the dates of snowmobiling; both of which are larger land use questions beyond the scope of your proposal.

Gray wolves and bald eagles should not be adversely affected by your proposal to groom snowmobile trails.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposal. I encourage you to seek the opinion of the local Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and U.S. Forest Service biologists for any site-specific concerns. Let me know if I can help you with anything else.

Sincerely,

Ben Conard
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
780 Creston Hatchery Road
Kalispell, MT 59901
phone: 406-758-6878 email: Ben_Conard@fws.gov
visit our website: <montanafieldoffice.fws.gov>

"Jerry Wandler"
<jwandler@fvcc.ed
u> To
<ben_conard@fws.gov>

Cabinet Resource Group, Montana Wilderness Association snowmobile grooming concerns:

Keeler – Rattle Mountain Road

1. **Regulations, Laws, Policy:** Condition 8 of the current Development and Operating Agreement for the Lincoln County Sno-Kats Snowmobile Club reads: "Follow the most stringent requirement should a conflict arise between this Development and Operating Agreement and any other approved Land Use Document, Regulation, Law or Policy." Trespass into the above-mentioned areas (in particular to Savage Mtn.) violates 1987 KNF forest plan standards (MA-8 Standards / Recreation C (4). Copy of said Standard is attached herein!

Condition 10 of the current Development and Operating Agreement for the Lincoln County Sno-Kats Snowmobile Club reads: "Abide by special Forest Supervisor Orders signed in accordance with 36CFR 261.50. Copy of that order is attached herein!

Grooming of the road system facilitates snowmobile access to higher elevations in the northern area of the Scotchman Peaks IRA. Some of these areas are MA–8 / recommended wilderness, and restricted to all motorized vehicles. Grooming agreements prohibit activities that violate State and Federal laws, yet trespass has been an ongoing problem. This trespass puts snowmobiles and their activities into critical mountain goat winter habitat, thereby stressing and or displacing mountain goats. Since the groomed trails currently facilitate this trespass, we would like to see what efforts will be made by Lincoln County Snowmobile clubs to mitigate this activity, and have those included as criteria of the Challenge Agreement.

2. **Maps:** The Kootenai Snow Trails map contains the following acknowledgement: "This map is provided as a cooperative effort between the Kootenai National Forest and the MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks"; it is totally inadequate. It states that "some areas are closed to cross-country snowmobile travel" and then directs a reader in another direction, "District and Forest Offices" to determine where such areas may be found. Groomed, and un-groomed trails are depicted, some which lead directly towards areas both of these agencies know are closed. It would be very easy to show these closed areas on the "trails map" in another shade or color. If complying with the law is a matter of knowing about the law, then these "free maps" need to be as accurate as possible. Barring these depictions on one document, groomed and un-groomed roads that lead to restricted areas need to be dropped from the map.

3. **Education:** If enforcement and regulation are to be the last tools used to solicit public compliance with laws of the land, then much more honest informational education effort needs to be put forth by the snowmobile club. This includes notifying other snowmobilers and clubs what areas are off-limits in their recreation area!

4. **Signing**: Maps are not always available or conveniently accessible. Therefore, informative signs at every one of the trailheads should incorporate / show features such as areas that are off-

limits or restricted for whatever reason. Every effort should be made to preclude ignorance of the law.

5. **Monitoring:** On Page 3 of the Development and Operating Agreement, item C, #2. "The Department shall: Monitor the Club for performance standards and safety, and periodically report to the Forest Service the adequacy of
Club Performance. Unless this is an empty gesture, there should be a paper trail of these monitoring reports cosigned by the three parties. Please provide them for an audit. Any agreement worth its salt should have monitoring that demonstrates compliance.

6. **Enforcement:** Last but not least as the attached photo (Savage Mtn. 3/18/06) so appropriately depicts, trespass is a real and serious issue; not only for snowmobilers but for Search & Rescue personnel if and when they are needed. Real dollars are going into this program and aspects of it do not measure up to its requirements. Can you demonstrate a proposal that incorporates effective measures that will kick in when the agreement is violated?

MAKE US PROUD TEAMS!!
GO LOGGERS!
GO TROJANS!

Donna -
This ad ran
3/7/07.
Call me if you
have any questions!
Thank you,
Teresa

Novice, Ages 9-10 - Gunner Fairbrother, 60 pounds, fourth; Dylan Roby, 60 pounds; Johnny Davidson, 65 pounds, second; Cody Kessel, 70 pounds, second; Isiah Sickler and Sydnee Ehlandfeldt, 70 pounds; Zach Crace, 75 pounds, second; Christopher Bryant, 75 pounds; Garrett Chappel, 80 pounds; Michael Miller, 85 pounds, first; Joshua Bowers, 90 pounds, second; Jason Schnackenberg, 95 pounds, first; Cody Barrick, 100 pounds, fourth; Austin Stoller, [illegible] pounds, Dakota Bassett, 105 pounds, third; Resse Jensen, 119 pounds; Skiller Dilley, 125 pounds, fourth; Josiah Coker, 130 pounds, third; Kody Berget, 135 pounds, third; Morgan Peek, 135 pounds, fourth; Dean "Cowboy" Willey, 140 pounds, second; and Wes Wheichel, 145 pounds, third.

Libby wrestlers will travel to Thompson Falls on March 10, Columbia Falls on March 17, Ronan on March 24, and the Montana Open in Bozeman March 31-April 1.

lead in the [illegible] 38-23 at halftime. Seeley-Swan outscored Troy 18-17 in the third quarter and 29-12 in the fourth.

Cray Keenen scored 22 points, including two 3-pointers, to lead Troy. Aaron Palmer added 13.

Troy fell 60-44 to Plains in Friday's loser-out round.

The Trojans led 15-9 at the

Two Loggers picked fo

Two Libby High School seniors have been selected to play in the 2007 Knights of Columbus Badlands Bowl in North Dakota.

Wide receiver Kyle Baker and defensive lineman Jake Graham will play in the June 16 game, which pits Montana's elite graduating football players against those from North Dakota at Whitney Stadium in Dickinson.

"They're very deserving," said Libby Logger head foot-

Lincoln County Sno-Kats

are preparing our updated EA on the existing groomed trails on the Kootenai National Forest. We are scoping and would appreciate any comments or concerns you may have. Please mail them to: P.O. Box 1180, Libby, MT 59923. Trail maps are available at KNF Supervisors Office or contact Donna O'Neil at 293-8585. Comments must be received by March 15, 2007.

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Guess Who's Cookin' For Dinner?
Friday, March 9th
Seafood Linguine